

LIBRARY SERVICES

Burlington Public Library
FISCAL YEAR 2019/2020
ANNUAL REPORT

Promoting Learning & Literacy

The youth staff team launched the **Stork Literacy** reading incentive program to engage families during pregnancy in the importance of reading. This initiative ties well with our longstanding **Babies Need Books** program, which gives parents of babies born at GRMC literacy information and a book funded by the Rotary Club and Friends of the Library.

The youth team successfully applied for two more grants from the **Governor's STEM Advisory Council** to continue to expand the library's STEM classes through new tools and training. A library staff member also was asked to serve on the Southeast Iowa Regional STEM Board.

With an eye toward offering more hands-on learning opportunities, including STEM activities, the former coffee shop was remodeled, with funding from the Library Foundation, into **The Create Space**, a new classroom and meeting room option.

The fiscal year started with a successful traditional **summer reading program** in 2019 and ended in the midst of the first ever virtual summer program. For summer 2020, the library team quickly converted the already planned summer reading programs into virtual offerings for all ages. Continuing the commitment to offering a robust enrichment experience over the summer, the library provided activities and performances to help community members stay engaged and learn new skills. Most importantly, the reading incentive programs helped children and families keep up or enhance reading skills to avoid summer learning loss.



Building Community

The **Stained Glass Artisan Club** donated ten beautiful stained glass lamp shades.

The fall **Clothing Swap**, the annual **Valentines for Seniors**, and the **Kindness Club's** activities, such as May Day baskets for seniors, are just some of the ways that the library team builds connection and serves our community.

One initiative to build community virtually was the **Some Good (Library) News** weekly segments on Facebook and YouTube which shared news of the library as well as stories of the great things happening in our community.

Expanding Options

In 2020, the **Digital Library** of downloadable and streaming content and research databases took center stage. To increase options, the library added **Hoopla** for streaming movies, tv, and music, as well as downloadable ebooks, audiobooks, and comics. In addition to offering a lot of options in one platform, users like that Hoopla has no waiting lists. **NewspaperArchives**, a tool used to search historic Iowa newspapers, was made available for remote use, and searches on this subscription service shot up with card holders doing local history and genealogy research making good use of it.

The **Create Collection** expanded for all ages, including new STEM kits for families to borrow. The ISU Extension Office donated some of the kits.

The Extension Office, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Kiwanis, and the Friends of the Library all contributed to a new **Money as You Grow Bookshelf** promoting financial literacy skills for children. The staff team also expanded the Job Center into the **Money Matters section** to highlight jobs, investing, and other financial literacy topics for adults.

With funding from the Alliant Foundation, a private donation, and the Library Foundation, the youth team remodeled to expand the socializing and play area outside the story time room and to create a **Toddler Interactive Learning Center**.

A **chat reference** option and an option to screen share from public computers for tech help were added. The staff team also worked to raise awareness of options to receive reference and technology support through social media, email, and phone.

As the staff promoted the Digital Library, they also created a new **Digital Library Card** option that allowed those without library cards to get access to digital resources without needing an in-person visit. This service was so well received that it is now an ongoing option for residents.

Also, in response to the building closure, the staff team developed **Curbside Library** services that include circulation of physical materials, printing, scanning, faxing, and more. This service will also be ongoing as a convenience for cardholders.

To support the **technology needs of the community** and bridge the digital divide in a time when the need increased with people working and learning from home, the library staff promoted Wi-Fi access in the parking lot, circulated mobile hotspots, developed laptop curbside checkout, and created a safely distanced computer lab.

For most of the year, the library was hopping with meeting rooms being used by individuals and community groups and a library calendar filled with educational and fun classes and events. In mid-March, when it wasn't possible to hold in-person classes, the library team made a quick pivot, with the first **virtual story time** being held on the first day the building closed. The virtual programs became an opportunity for creativity and innovation. The staff presenters welcomed special guests, took the show on the road to meet chickens, goats, and alpacas, and experimented with different platforms. The Beyond the Book Club transitioned to ebooks and Zoom meetings. Teen book talks, Wiggle Time and Babygarten also took to Zoom, and Facebook Live was used for STEM activities, yoga sessions, and more. Recorded content allowed for wider participation that fit users schedules.

Community Comments

"I would like to say that the library's online resources have been a life saver for me. Especially the hotspot which has served as literally my only means of contact with anyone or anything. They have kept me from being completely cut off from my children, the pharmacy, my doctors and the rest of the outside world. I wanted to express that the library and it's resources and opportunities are invaluable to me and our community."

"This library is very child friendly. I have a home daycare. This is one of my kids favorite places to visit!"

"Thank God for the library. I don't know how I'd get through this without you."

"I'm glad you are taking every precaution before rushing into opening. You all have been wonderful with what you have been able to do while shut down."

Virtual Wiggle Time classes are "a bright spot in the kids' week!"

"Love the library, so glad you are finding ways to reach out."

"I think we have the best library in the state of Iowa...no exaggeration...I could eat and sleep there if it were allowed"

Improving Continuously

Changing the **parking lot lights to LED** completed the conversion of all lighting inside and outside of the library building to high energy efficiency. The lighting quality and coverage in the parking lot also is better, which improves security and safety for library users. The Library Foundation funded all of the lighting conversions.

New self checkout stations funded by the Library Foundation and installed in January have been well received as more user friendly and reliable.

An **upgrade of the library's technology network** included the replacement of six wireless access points, six network switches, and a firewall. E-rate funding covered 80% of the cost with a grant from the Library Foundation covering the rest.

